

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) ~~An apparatus for protecting a passenger seated in a seat having a seat cushion and a seat back comprising:~~ The apparatus of claim 10, further comprising:

~~an air belt connected to the seat cushion and the seat back and configured to inflate to form a sleeve wall at a side of the seat cushion; and
a plate configured to rotate about a fixed shaft; and
wherein a length of the air belt is configured to decrease when the air belt is inflated.~~

2. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the plate is disposed under a seating surface of the seat cushion and is configured to tilt upward.

3. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for protecting a passenger seated in a seat having a seat cushion and a seat back, comprising:

an air belt connected to the seat cushion and the seat back and configured to inflate to form a sleeve wall at a side of the seat cushion; and
a plate disposed under the seating surface of the seat cushion and configured to tilt upward,

wherein a length of the air belt is configured to decrease when the air belt is inflated,
and

wherein the air belt is connected to the plate and the seat back.

4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the plate is operatively connected with at least one of a seat belt buckle and a seat belt lap anchor so that when the plate tilts upward the at least one of the buckle and the lap anchor move downward.

5. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 4, wherein a connection between the plate and the at least one of the buckle and the anchor is a wire.

6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 5, wherein movement of the wire is limited to one direction.

7. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for protecting a passenger seated in a seat having a seat cushion and a seat back comprising an air belt connected to the seat cushion and the seat back and configured to inflate to form a sleeve wall at a side of the seat cushion, wherein a length of the air belt is configured to decrease when the air belt is inflated, and wherein the air belt is connected to a plate located under a seating surface of the seat so that when the air belt inflates and decreases in length the plate tilts upward to inhibit the passenger from being subjected to a submarine phenomenon.

8. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for protecting a passenger seated in a vehicle seat having a seat cushion and a seat back comprising an air belt connected to the seat cushion and the seat back and configured to inflate to form a sleeve wall at a side of the seat cushion, wherein a length of the air belt is configured to decrease when the air belt is inflated, wherein the air belt is configured to inflate when the vehicle is detected to be involved in a side crash, and wherein the air belt is configured to pretension a seat belt when the air belt is inflated.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently Amended) ~~The apparatus of claim 8, further comprising~~ An apparatus for protecting a passenger seated in a vehicle seat having a seat cushion and a seat back, the apparatus comprising:

an air belt connected to the seat cushion and the seat back and configured to inflate to form a sleeve wall at a side of the seat cushion, when the vehicle is detected to be involved in a side crash; and

a belt buckle configured to move downward when the air belt is inflated to thereby apply a pretension to the seat belt a seat belt,

wherein a length of the air belt is configured to decrease when the air belt is inflated.

11. (Currently Amended) ~~The apparatus of claim 8, further comprising~~ An apparatus for protecting a passenger seated in a vehicle seat having a seat cushion and a seat back, the apparatus comprising:

an air belt connected to the seat cushion and the seat back and configured to inflate to form a sleeve wall at a side of the seat cushion, when the vehicle is detected to be involved in a side crash; and

a lap anchor configured to move downward when the air belt is inflated to thereby apply a pretension to ~~the seat belt~~ a seat belt,

wherein a length of the air belt is configured to decrease when the air belt is inflated.

12. (Original) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein movement of the belt buckle is limited to the downward direction.

13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein movement of the lap anchor is limited to the downward direction.

14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8, further comprising an upwardly tilting plate located under a seating surface of the cushion, wherein the plate is configured to tilt upwards when the air belt inflates.

15. (New) The apparatus of claim 11, further comprising:
a plate configured to rotate about a fixed shaft.

16. (New) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the plate is disposed under a seating surface of the seat cushion and is configured to tilt upward.